Matt Crafton

Winemaker

Matt Crafton leads the production team as Winemaker at Chateau Montelena. He not only oversees all production and operations, but also plays a critical role in strategy, education, and technology at the winery.

With a sense of determinate optimism and the need to further engage his right brain, Matt leaned away from a career in finance after earning a degree in Economics from the University of Virginia in 2003 and instead was drawn to winemaking. Starting at the very bottom in the cellar, Matt internalized the words from his father, "Smart people in the world are a dime a dozen. All you can do is control how hard you work." Years later, after methodically building his toolbelt in wineries and vineyards on the east coast, Napa and Sonoma, Matt was hired as Enologist at Montelena upon finishing his degree in Viticulture and Enology at UC Davis in 2008. He was promoted to Winemaker in 2014.

The dynamic atmosphere of Montelena inspires Matt to run with new ideas, striving toward perfection with every project. In addition to overseeing the largest vineyard replant of the last 40 years, Matt also plays an instrumental role in the winery's advancement beyond the traditional winemaker responsibilities such as leading brand and communications strategy, operational resilience, sustainability investments, and water rights projects. He believes in the importance of education, and facilitates collaborative learning at the winery through internal seminars and mentorships.

When it comes to winemaking, Matt's approach follows no template. Instead, he works towards creating terroir-driven wines that embrace the unique expression of the vineyard and vintage. "The vineyard produces this raw material with so much potential. My job is to take this humble ingredient and not only make something delicious but also inspiring."